

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
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AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINR, IN, US, CH
SUBJECT: U-2 PLANES ALLEGED TO HAVE FLOWN FROM INDIA, 1963-1965

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" HEADLINED
ITS MAY 20 EDITION, "US SPY PLANES OPERATED FROM INDIA
BETWEEN 1963 AND 1965", AND IN A STORY BY DULDIP NAYAR,
FOR WHICH HE DOES NOT INDICATE THE SOURCE OF THE INFOR-
MATION, ALLEGED THAT INDIA PROVIDED FACILITIES
FOR THESE PLANES IN ORISSA AND IN THE FOOTHILLS
OF THE HIMALAYAS. NAYAR CLAIMS THAT INDIA SOUGHT
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INFORMATION ABOUT CHINA'S PROGRESS IN MANUFACTURING
THE ATOM BOMB AND "SUBSEQUENT DEVICES", WHILE THE
PRINCIPAL INTEREST OF THE US WAS IN THE RANGE OF
CHINA'S MISSILES. THE PLANES ALLEGEDLY WERE BASED
IN BANGKOK AND WOULD FLY INTO THE SPECIALLY EQUIP-
PED AIRFIELD IN ORISSA, WHERE THEY WOULD CHANGE
THEIR AMERICAN FOR INDIAN MARKINGS. ONLY AMERICANS

FLEW THE U-2'S.

2. NAYAR ALLEGES THAT AN ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE CABINET SECRETARIAT KNOWN AS "AVIATION RESEARCH CENTRE" WAS SET UP IN 1963 TO PROVIDE COVER. R.N. MULLICK, THE DIRECTOR OF THE INTELLIGENCE BUREAU, REPORTEDLY WAS "CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH IT".

3. THE "EXPRESS" ARTICLE STATES THAT WHEN THE SOVIETS BECAME SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THE PROJECT THE INDIANS GAVE THEM A "STRAIGHT NO" REPLY. MOSCOW'S SUSPICIONS WERE "CONFIRMED" BECAUSE OF THE QUALITY OF THE INFORMATION INDIA WAS ABLE TO SUPPLY CONCERNING CHINA'S PROGRESS IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD. (NAYAR POINTS OUT THAT INDIA DID NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITY ON ITS OWN TO MONITOR THE CHINESE.)

4. IN CLOSING, NAYAR REFERS TO THE PLUTONIUM DEVICE WHICH REPORTEDLY WAS ABANDONED IN THE HIMALAYAS. HE WRITES: "INCIDENTALLY, A PLUTONIUM DEVICE CAN REMAIN DANGEROUSLY RADIOACTIVE FOR MORE THAN 20,000 YEARS AND THE HAZARD CANNOT BE DETECTED UNTIL EVERY INCH OF WATER AND LAND IS EXAMINED." END UNCLASSIFIED.

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5. COMMENT: SINCE NONE OF THE PRINCIPALS ON TODAY'S POLITICAL STAGE COULD BE ACCUSED OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE U-2 FLIGHTS -- PM DESAI GAVE UP HIS POSITION AS FINANCE MINISTER IN SEPTEMBER 1963 (A POST WHICH PRESUMABLY WOULD NOT ENTAIL RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS) AND MRS. GANDHI DID NOT JOIN THE GOVERNMENT UNTIL JUNE 1964 AS MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, WE DO NOT THINK NAYAR'S "REVELATIONS" WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL IMPACT. AT THE MOST, MRS. GANDHI MIGHT BE MARGINALLY AFFECTED, IF THE JUDGEMENT OF HER FATHER, PM NEHRU, IN ALLOWING THE U-2 TO OPERATE FROM INYSA IS IMPUGNED. SINCE PARLIAMENT IS NOT IN SESSION, THIS FORUM IS NOT AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO MIGHT SEEK TO MAKE POLITICAL HAY OUT OF THE STORY. IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT AYAR, SOMEWHAT GRATUITIOUSLY, HAS PROBABLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE ANXIETY OF SOME INDIANS ABOUT THE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROBLEM RESULTING FROM THE ABANDONED PLUTONIUM DEVICE.
GOHEEN

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